

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-10 and 13-15 are pending. Claims 11 and 12 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claims 10, 14 and 15 are amended. Claims 1 and 10 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the

Reasons for Entry of Amendments

At the outset, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application in condition for allowance.

In the alternative, if the Examiner does not agree that this application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purpose of appeal. This Amendment reduces the issues on appeal by canceling allowable claim 12 and intervening claim 11, and incorporating the subject matter thereof into independent claim 10. This Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that the Examiner has just now presented new grounds for rejection in this Final Office Action.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner considers claims 1-9 to be allowed, and considers claims 12, 14, and 15 to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of the base and any intervening claim.

In response, as noted below, independent claim 10 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 12 and intervening claim 13. Claims 12 and 13 are now canceled.

Independent claim 10 is now in condition for allowance.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In order to overcome this rejection, claims 14 and 15 are amended to correct each of the issues pointed out by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 10 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Karr (U.S. 3,379,300). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amendments to Independent Claim 10

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, and as noted above, independent claim 10 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 12 and intervening claim 11.

Claims 11 and 12 are now canceled.

Independent claim 10 is now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 14 and 15 are amended to place them in better form.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

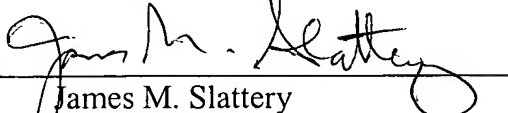
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
James M. Slattery
Reg. No. 28,380
P. O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

JMS/CTT/ags

